

JULY 2020

I work with a small team running a Christian charity in a Muslim country in Africa. We have several projects focussing on education and agriculture to serve the community and build trust and relationships.

We long to see God bring salvation to people who don't have the chance to hear of forgiveness through Jesus and reconciliation with the Father. So, we pray and share this life-changing news through our friendships, in our projects and online. We have some freedom to sell the Word of God in different languages, to show films about the life of Christ and to have discussions about faith. Our students and neighbours try to persuade us to follow their way, so we have an open door to ask questions, to listen and to preach Christ!

There are a small number of first-generation Jesus followers in the country but no organised national church yet. Some meet in small groups; others are isolated. There is pressure from unbelieving family members and neighbours and threats of violence if someone is open about their faith. Many are still secret believers. The spiritual battle is intense. But we know that Jesus has the victory and that his people have overcome.

What's been the impact of COVID-19 and what challenges is it raising?

Lockdown was a huge challenge to small business owners, migrant workers, and street children. They need daily wages to survive, leftovers from restaurants and small change from passers-by. We thank God that we were able to help some local friends with food, rent, medicines and prayer. For the small body of believers there are already many barriers for gathering together and this added another. Most do not have good enough internet access so meeting online was not possible.

We were grateful to receive funding for our adult education project – without student fees for two months we couldn't cover costs. I had high hopes for a time of increased prayer and equipping: there was much to be thankful for but I found it emotionally draining trying to make decisions and not having access to my usual life-giving activities and friendships.

Praise God not many people have died from the virus and symptoms have been mild. There are many more deadly diseases here that people are more afraid of.

What encouragements have you seen this year?

Thank you for praying for me and for the people in this country. We praise God that his followers here have persevered, and that people are seeking the truth. Here are a few examples: a brother who gave in to family pressure to go back to his old religion at the beginning of the year has recommitted and is now more zealous for the Lord and sharing with others.

One lady told us she wants to follow Jesus but is afraid of what her family will do to her if she does.

A man said he would teach his brothers what he was learning from another Jesus follower!

Another, old, man still remembers Jesus stories that were shared with him 40 years ago and wants peace with God before he dies.

A group of devout ladies recently allowed a believer to share the gospel story and to pray with them. God loves these people and he is at work!

How can we pray for you and your country?

Pray for the local believers not to give up meeting together, but to encourage one another daily. Pray for unity among all believers here and for us all to receive power from the Holy Spirit to change and grow, to testify, and to endure suffering for the gospel. Pray for unbelieving family members to come to Christ.

Would some even commit to pray daily for this small body of believers? Pray for Christian workers like me to get refreshed this summer. Pray for love for those we minister to – we feel called to these precious people, but it is not always easy to love our neighbours, to embrace another culture and die to our own ways of doing things.

Pray for those who are seeking right now, to find life and hope in the Lord Jesus, and *family* in his people.

Ask the Lord of the harvest to provide more workers who love God and love Muslims and could be helpful here.

Contact the church office for details on how to pray for this worker and this nation and for recruitment information.